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DECORATION & FURNITURE

PRACTICAL WOOD-CARVING FOR AMATEURS.



III.

AFTER the pupil has carved the design given in the previous paper, the tools used will begin to be dull. They must be sharpened at once. The sharpening of tools requires so much skill, time and strength, that it is generally best to send them to a shop.

If you prefer to sharpen your own tools, get a hard fine oil stone. Drop some oil on the stone, hold a chisel flat on the bevel, and be careful to keep it so. If you turn the edge of the tool, getting what is called a wire edge, turn the tool over and rub it on the other side. If a tool is broken or nicked and ragged from work or bad handling, send it to a shop, and have it ground down to a straight edge. To sharpen a gouge, rub it on the outside, turning it constantly, to keep

the curve of the tool. Hold it pretty flat on the stone; otherwise you will be liable to turn the edge. If you do turn the edge, take a small oil stone, called a "slip stone," cut to a thin edge on one side, and with this sharpen the gouge on the inside. An oil stone of this kind with one edge sharp enough to fit the acute angle of the V tool can be bought, but this will not often be necessary if the tool is properly handled.

For a second lesson take the design shown in Fig. 3, in which the conventionalized flower forms require slight modelling. Draw the design on the wood very carefully, the great beauty of a conventional design consisting in its absolute accuracy. If you do not draw well enough to put in the figures in freehand, cut the shape in stiff paper, and use it. In this design get the centre of the diamond, and holding the medium gouge straight, and turning it once, cut the "boss" in the centre of the figure. Outline the petals with the flat gouge, setting the tool at the point where petals join, and cutting to the outside point. The width and the sweep of the tool with a little handling will give the outline required. With the chisel bevel around the edges deep enough to get an effect of light and shade. Make the straight cut indicated in the middle of each petal, with the V tool, cutting toward the boss, and making the cut deepest at the

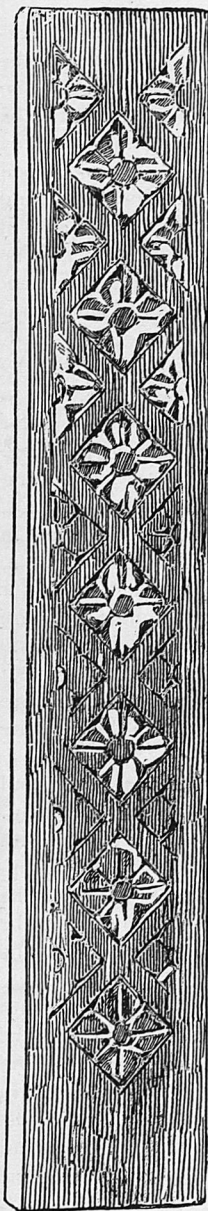


FIG. 3.

centre. Model the flower with one cut on each half petal with the medium gouge. Round slightly the sharp edges of the boss in the centre. For this design draw the diamonds two inches square and the plain bands half an inch wide. A conventional design of this kind, drawn on a smaller scale, is often used in background or "all-over" work. Whole panels of it are very effective—for instance, the front of a drawer in

a table, or the side panels of a cabinet where the more conspicuous panels are done in natural designs. The two designs I have given would be equally suitable for horizontal or for upright borders. There are other conventional designs which would be suitable only for upright panels—as those conventionalized from leaf forms in which the growth of the plant is still indicated. Notice them carefully, and no matter how unleaflike they may be now in their stiffness, respect the motif of the design enough to be sure to let them grow up and not down. The general rule in the selection of natural and conventional designs is to carve the more conspicuous parts in natural designs, making them faithful studies from nature, and using conventional designs for margins, mouldings, and subordinate parts of the article of furniture which is being decorated. In a picture-frame, the top and side rails should be more heavily carved than the lower rail, and if bosses or brackets are added they also will be most effective in deep relief. Mass the carving, and remember there must be plain spaces to rest the eye.

CALISTA HALSEY PATCHIN.

HINTS FOR THE HALL AND STAIRCASE.

THE floors of the entrance halls of our ordinary houses are, as a rule, either boarded or flagged, and are usually covered with oilcloth or linoleum, which soon becomes shabby and wears out. The dust and dirt also collect underneath.

In the first case, the boards may be taken up and the floor filled in between the joists with concrete and tiling, or marble mosaic laid therein, always forming, if possible, a sunk space for the mat. Broad masses of plain tiles, four inches or six inches square, of either red, gray, or buff, are always more satisfactory than elaborate patterns, and have the advantage of being cheaper and also less liable to get loose, for it must be remembered that a tile floor laid upon joists in this way is never so lasting as when laid upon a solid foundation. In the second case the margins of the flags may be painted a good warm color, or a border of incised lines may be cut and filled in with colored cements. Sometimes the flags are laid in squares placed diagonally; in a case of this sort, a good effect may be produced, at no very great expense, by filling in the joints with colored cement, and placing a small red or black tile in the corner of each flag, which, of course, must be cut out to receive it.

The walls may be painted, for two thirds of their height, a neutral color, not light enough to show fingermarks, and, if it is not intended to have many pictures, a little simple stencilling may be done in a darker shade of color.

Dividing this portion from the upper third of the wall, which may be called the frieze, a rail to hang the pictures from, or a small shelf for china, may be placed. Of course it would be necessary to plug the walls for the rail or shelf, and as this increases the expense and injures the plastering, and the patching rendered necessary thereby usually shows through the painting, sooner or later, it will be found better to adopt the simpler plan of fixing a half-inch iron gas pipe, with ornamental holdfasts which can be driven in between the bricks; this will serve the double purpose of picture rod and mould for dividing the upper portion of the wall from the lower.

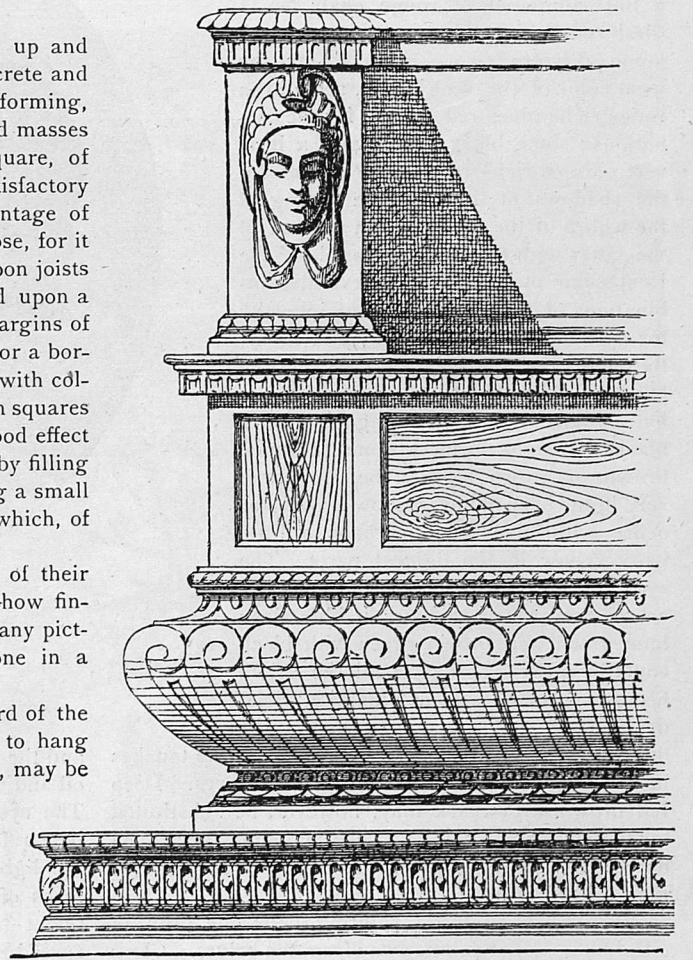
The upper third of the wall may be painted a lighter tint of the color than that below, and, as it is likely to get dirty very soon where gas is much used, it might be painted in distemper, which could easily be washed off and re-done when required. For this reason, it would not be advisable to do anything elaborate, such as animal or figure painting, but, instead, a simple stencil pattern or border in distemper, with panels at intervals, in which figure tiles might be placed, let in

flush with the face of the plaster, would be both effective and comparatively inexpensive.

The staircase, as a rule, in most of our ordinary houses is such a wretched affair that it is difficult to know what to do with it. If it happens to form portion of the entrance hall, then the same scheme of decoration must be continued. If it is distinct from the entrance hall, the walls may have a painted dado of a somewhat darker tint than those in the entrance hall, with stencilling in a lighter color upon it, and finished with a dado mould corresponding in height to the hand-rail. The wood-work, as a rule, is so meagre and bad that it had better be painted a quiet warm tone of red or brown, in order to attract as little notice as possible; the margins of the stairs may also be treated in the same way. The walls may be stencilled in order to form panels or frames for pictures, and a deep frieze, with a bold stencil ornament, will go a long way to improve what is generally the dreariest portion of this class of house.

DR. DRESSER ON FURNITURE.

BEFORE all other considerations comes that of utility; and, in order that any piece of furniture be well designed, it is necessary that the designer have a clear appreciation of the object which the work is to serve, though to this he is too often indifferent.



CARVED BENCH IN THE BARGELLO AT FLORENCE.

Supposing a seat is to be formed, the question arises, is it to be merely something to sit upon—a stool? or is a back-rest, as well as a seat, required—in other words, a chair? Is it to be a seat for one person only (a stool or chair), or for two or more—such as a settee? or is it to serve as a seat and something to lie upon—as, for example, a couch or sofa?

Whatever be the object we are about to produce, we must first ascertain, with exactness, the want which is to be met, and then seek to meet that want in the most perfect manner. If we are to make a seat